

AccessLetter

**Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities**

Partnerships for Employment

While October may be National Disability Employment Awareness Month, many agencies work year-round to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. "Partnerships for Employment" is a program that takes employment services to people where they live. It is a project of North Charles Community Career Links, an organization in Somerville that provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities. The aim of this federally funded project is to provide free employment services that meet the needs of tenants who live in subsidized housing and have disabilities. The program is mobile in that it goes to people in their individual homes and on the premises of housing sites primarily in Cambridge and Somerville.

A large part of the mission of the Partnerships project is to introduce vocational rehabilitation services to the local housing authorities and to work collaboratively with The One Stop Career Centers and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). By blending the services of several agencies, the Partnerships for Employment project can present tenants with a larger "buffet of services" than may have previously have been available to them.

The Partnerships for Employment project is already working with Winn Management at 808 Memorial Drive, with individuals from CASCAP supportive housing and at Rindge Towers. They would like to establish relationships with additional housing sites. The philosophy is that individuals who have more support and more resources have a better chance of finding gainful employment.

In addition, the Partnerships program also provides workshops on resume writing, interview techniques, computer skills, networking, and on-line job applications. Individuals can receive customized services tailored to their specific needs such as career counseling, job coaching, or interview practice. Jennifer Sprague, the new placement specialist, says, "The individualized focus of the program enables each client to access the resources that are necessary for successful job placement and retention."

This grant-funded program, which will continue for at least one more year, is making a valiant effort to connect with the housing sites. The aim is to reach as many individuals as possible, to provide support, and to spread

the word about the employment resources that are available in the community.



If you would like to learn more about Partnerships for Employment or are

interested in other employment services, please contact Jennifer Sprague at 617-864-0225 or [<jsprague@northcharles.org>](mailto:jsprague@northcharles.org).

By Jill Furumoto

Save The Date—Free Forum Making Sense of the New Medicare Drug Coverage

Expert speakers will help you sort out the important facts about this important new benefit, including:

- Enrollment periods – Why sign up now?
- How do I choose the right private insurance plan for me?
- What will happen when MassHealth no longer covers my prescriptions?
- Extra Help – low income subsidies to help pay insurance premiums:

**Tuesday, October 6, 2005
Cambridge City Hall Annex
344 Broadway – second floor
12 noon – 2 pm
Lunch will be served!**

(More on Medicare Forum page 2)
Noontime Forum on October 6

Making Sense of Medicare Part D

The new Medicare prescription drug insurance program that goes into effect in January 2006 involves lots of terminology, decisions and deadlines can seem overwhelming. But we can help! At noon on October 6 there will be a free *forum* at the Cambridge City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, with experts to answer your questions.

What often gets referred to as just "Medicare Part D" is actually Title I of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act enacted by Congress in 2003. In general prescription drug coverage that was previously provided by Medicaid will now be provided by private prescription drug insurance plans. Any person who wants prescription drug insurance and is eligible for Medicare Part D – and this includes most people over 65 and many younger people with disabilities – will now need to enroll in one of these private plans. There will be some financial subsidies for people on low incomes.

The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, in conjunction with the Employees' Committee on Diversity and the Department of Human Service Programs, invites you to this Medicare Drug Insurance *forum* to learn more about these benefits, particularly as they relate to people with disabilities. See Oct. 6 listing in the calendar section on page 6 for details and contact information.

Internships at State House with Stipends

Easter Seals has six internship positions at the State House in Boston for young adults with disabilities and is

currently accepting applications for the fall/winter semester. Easter Seals is honored to be partnering with the Legislative Education Office to establish consistent, active participation by students with disabilities in the legislative internship program. Internships are for six-weeks – sometimes longer – and

interns receive a stipend of \$1200 upon completion of their assignments.



For more detailed information about being an intern check the State House web site at:

<www.mass.gov/lib/services/internships.htm>. The internship positions for students with disabilities are funded by the Boston Foundation and Easter Seals of Massachusetts. Interested applicants need to submit a letter of interest and a resume to Easter Seals. There is no official deadline for submitting applications, but the sooner the better because the slots for internships diminish quickly a few weeks before the semester begins.

Easter Seals staff and Internship Program Advisory Committee members will review the applications and select one to two participants for fall and winter internships and two to three participants for summer internships. Internship Program participants selected by Easter Seals will take part in the career-counseling phase of the Program. Qualifying participants will receive political mentoring and peer job coaching by Easter Seals public affairs staff and volunteers to provide the skills needed to complete the Massachusetts legislative internship program application and prepare for the interview process. The Legislative Education Office will review Easter Seals Internship Program participants with the larger applicant pool for legislative internships, conduct interviews, and select an intern class.

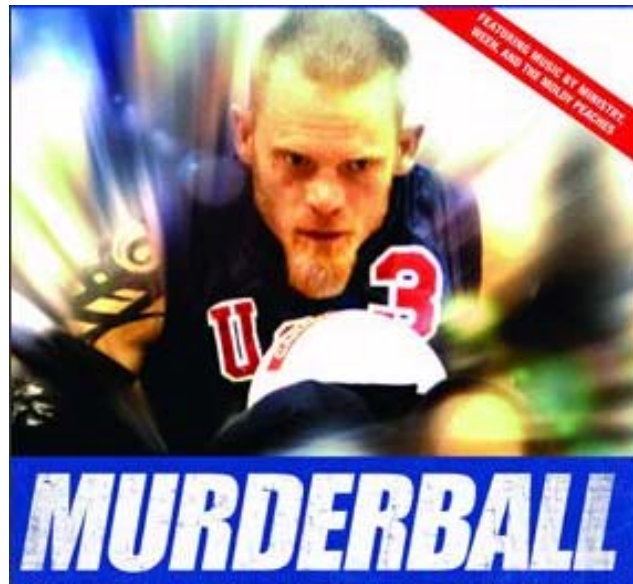
If an Easter Seals participant is selected for this legislative internship, Easter Seals will provide support to the interns with disabilities in their self-advocacy with the hosting legislator and the Legislative Education Office to insure the interns' workstations and offices are fully accessible. For more information contact Joe Bellil, Director of Public Affairs for Easter Seals Massachusetts at 617-226-2852 or <jbelleil@EasterSealsMA.org>.

Murderball -- A Documentary

If you're not in the habit of plunking down nine or ten dollars to watch a documentary film, consider making an exception for *Murderball*.

Murderball is not your run-of-the-mill disability film that overflows with saccharine hope or maudlin inspiration. Chances are, whether you have a disability or not, *Murderball* is a film that will actually change the way you think about people with disabilities.

“Murderball” was the original name given to the team sport invented by a bunch of Canadian wheelchair users with quadriplegia. Played on a regulation-sized basketball court, the sport involves full-contact competition between two teams, where the players use specialized wheelchairs outfitted with metal plates (think *Mad Max*) to bash each other. Later, perhaps to make the sport more palatable to corporate sponsors, the name was changed to “quad rugby” or “wheelchair rugby.”



If the film had just stuck to its quad rugby storyline, it still would have made a pretty good sports documentary. Crisply edited and with lots of action and low-to-the-ground hand-held camerawork, the sports sequences in *Murderball* literally vibrate with tension. But by delving more deeply into the personal lives of these athletes (as well as a couple of would-be athletes) off the rugby court, this movie transcends the sports documentary genre. In the process, the documentary reveals some unsentimental truths about living with a disability in this day and time.

Murderball succeeds because of its craftsmanship and

because of the characters. Most of the guys in *Murderball* start out as the macho jocks that used to pick on the more cerebral types in high school. “You’re not gonna hit me ‘cause I’m in a wheelchair?” asks Mark Zupan, star of the USA quad rugby team, in a typical moment of bravado. “Go ahead, hit me -- I’ll hit you back.” But by following the everyday lives of its players and exploring their personalities and relationships with families and friends, *Murderball* lets each of its characters transcend the

testosterone-addled stereotype and reveal a more complex persona.

Murderball is the perfect antidote to those “better dead than disabled” movie fantasies like *Million-Dollar Baby* and *The Sea Inside* that have been released in the past year. If you have a disability, but tend to be risk-averse *Murderball* just may encourage you to take a few more chances in life. Or, at the very least it may just encourage you to laugh at yourself a bit more often. If you don’t have a disability, *Murderball* just may dispel some of your misconceptions and shatter the myths and stereotypes you have about people with disabilities.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

- September 7 Weekly Support Group for Adults with Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder** will continue to meet on Wednesdays at Christ Church in Cambridge, 6-7:30 p.m. and is accepting new participants. It is FREE but you need to contact Angelica Sawyer of College Bound to register, 617-661-3117 voice or 617-497-5257 fax. The address is Zero Garden Street; this is the gray wood Episcopal church on the far side of the Old Burying Ground if you are walking from Harvard Square. The group will meet in the Library of the Parish House, which is wheelchair accessible. The group is sponsored in part by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC).
- September 7 Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7-9 pm at McLean Hospital in Belmont (Demarneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture, 7-8 pm, on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Call 617-855-3665 for more information.
- September 7 RSI (repetitive strain injury) Monthly Drop-in Support & Information Meeting** (no registration is necessary) on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. Be sure to arrive before 7 p.m. when the lobby door is locked. New location: 650 Beacon Street in Boston, 4th floor Conference Room, just steps from the MBTA station in Kenmore Square. RSI Action volunteers will answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book. For more information, call 617-247-6827, check web at <www.rsiaction.org> or email <cnot@rsiaction.org> and include your phone number so you can be informed of any last-minute changes to the date or location.
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- September 9 Registration **DEADLINE for Mission: Employment 2** on Sept. 27 and **Greater Boston Action Meeting** on Sept. 16.
- September 13 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm 142. Go to <www.bostonvoiceusers.com> to find out more about meetings and discussions.
- Sept. 14 & 15 **Community Access Monitor Training** – Learn how to help your community become more accessible by signing up for this workshop presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD). Two-day program, 9 am – 4:30 pm, will be held at the Brookline Town Hall at 333 Washington Street and is co-sponsored by the Boston Center for Independent Living and the New England ADA and Accessible IT Center. Training will cover regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and hands-on practice doing site surveys. Fee is \$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals; lunch included both days: make checks payable to the “Town of Brookline.” Registration DEADLINE is Sept. 2 if you are requesting accommodations (large print, Braille, sign language interpreters); otherwise it is Sept. 8. For more information, contact Bruce Bruneau at MOD, 617-727-7440 voice/TTY or 800-322-2020 voice/TTY. This is a scent free event; please do NOT wear perfume, after-shave, cologne, etc.
- September 15 **Basic Rights** is a seminar that introduces parents to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It teaches them how to be effective partners with the school, to make decisions about their child’s eligibility for special education, to plan and monitor the educational progress of their child. Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) at the Dept. of Public Health, 10 Malcolm X Blvd. in Roxbury, 10 am – 12 noon. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>. Workshop materials are also available in Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.
- September 15 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 – 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. [NOTE that this is not the 2nd Thursday of the month, which is the usual meeting date.]
- September 16 **Greater Boston Action Meeting – Campaign for Equal Access**, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Boston Tremont Hotel, 275 Tremont Street, Boston. Work with other members of the disability community to create achievable action steps for change. Discuss problems people have with transportation and housing that add to the difficulty of finding employment. The Action Meeting is FREE but participants must register by Sept. 9. Sponsored by Easter Seals of Massachusetts, Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) and Enable America. Contact Helen Hendrickson at BCIL for more information: 617-338-6665 (voice), 617-338-6662 (TTY) or <hhendrickson@bostoncil.org>.
- September 16-18 **Early Fall Camping Weekend at Wells State Park** near Sturbridge will be a chance to learn the basics of tent camping, explore trails, go kayaking and enjoy the camaraderie around a campfire. All Out Adventures staff provides planned accessible activities, use of adaptive recreation equipment and instruction, and dinner both nights. Funded by Project INSPIRE. Advance registration is required; campsites are \$12/night for Mass. residents plus \$10 /person. Contact the All Out Adventure office for more information at 413-527-8980 or <info@alloutadventures.org>.
- September 17 **Women with Disabilities Symposium: A Practical Approach to Providing Quality Care to Women with Visual, Hearing, and Mobility Impairments**, is a one-day conference at Harvard Medical School that will provide clinicians and practice managers with knowledge and skills to care more sensitively and effectively for women with disabilities. Intended for physicians, physician assistants, nurses, physical and occupational therapists, mental health clinicians, medical students and health care administrators, the conference is co-sponsored by Harvard Medical School's Center of Excellence in Women's Health and the Center for Women with Disabilities at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Continuing education credits are available. The registration fee is \$75 and enrollment is limited to 125 participants. To learn more and register, go to <www.hms.harvard.edu/coewh/DisabilityConference> or contact Lindsay Giorgi at <Lindsay_giorgi@hms.harvard.edu> or call (617) 732-5502
- September 18 **A fundraiser for the NAMI Cambridge/Middlesex affiliate** (of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) will be held at the home of one member from 4-6 pm, at 24 Arlington Street in Cambridge. For more information contact June Mendelson at 617-864-0407 or <june.ellen@comcast.net>.
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- September 19 **An IEP for My Child** is a workshop that takes parents step-by-step through the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP) for their child who receives special education services because of his/her disability. Parents learn how to articulate a Vision for their child, how to use the results of evaluations to set goals and how to measure their child's progress. The workshop, presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), will be held at the Boston Preparatory Charter School, 1286 Hyde Park Ave. in Boston, 6-8 pm. Workshop materials are also available in Spanish.
- September 19 **Forum on Caring for Elders With Hearing Loss**, 6 – 8 pm, will be presented by staff from the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The program is designed to offer caregivers information and strategies for effectively dealing with issues related to hearing loss in elders and provide information on useful assistive technology. A light supper will be served and pre-registration is required. Contact Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services at 617-628-2601 ext. 3151 or <email info@eldercare.org>.
- September 20 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.
- September 22 **LD/ADHD Task Force** for persons with Learning Disabilities / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC State headquarters, 27-48 Wormwood Street in Boston (south of Fort Point Channel) in the 6th floor large conference room. Business meeting from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information contact Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 voice, 617-497-5257 fax.
- September 27 **Mission: Employment 2** – Join Massachusetts disability, employment, and workforce development professionals as well as people with disabilities to get essential information on important employment initiatives and opportunities. This conference will be at Royal Plaza Hotel and Trade Center, 181 Boston Post Road in West Marlborough, MA. The cost is \$15; individuals with disabilities and their family members who are not affiliated with an agency can request a fee waiver on the registration form. For more information contact Berenise Reyes-Albino at 617-287-4314 (voice), 617.287.4350 (TTY) or <berenise.albino@umb.edu>. This event is sponsored by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) of U. Mass Boston and funded by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, Mass. WorkFORCE Action grant (CDFA #17.261).
- September 27 **Medicare Part D Informational Seminar in Spanish**, 10 am at 105 Windsor Street in Cambridge. For more information and to register contact Isabel Giraud or Cira Espinosa at 617-661-9406 or contact <concilio@conciliohispano.org>.
- September 27 **Beyond Difference – an interfaith panel discussion for anyone involved in disability ministry**. Our perceptions of people can be deceiving, particularly when it comes to disability. What do we overlook because of this, and what roles do spirituality and faith play in helping us not to distance ourselves from people who appear to be different? Presented by Spiritual Connections from The Arc of Greater Fall River, Inc., 8:30 am to noon at Notre Dame Church, 529 Eastern Avenue in Fall River, MA. Please RSVP by Sept. 22 by contacting Sheila Charron at 508-730-1209, x327 or 508-679-0001 or <antique1155@comcast.net>.
- September 28 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT)**, 1-3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request Interpreters. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings
- September 28 **Mission Employment 2: Self-Employment and Small Business Development** – 9 am to 4 pm at the Holiday Inn, 500 Lincoln Street in Worcester. This FREE workshop will introduce self-employment and small business development as an option for individuals with significant disabilities. Successful business owners with disabilities from around the country and learn about what it takes to develop a small business. A Massachusetts-based panel will share their experiences and information about local resources. Cary Griffin, known nationally for his work in the areas of disability and employment will be the key presenter. This training is offered **free of charge** through the Massachusetts WorkFORCE Action Grant at the Institute for Community Inclusion/UMass Boston. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (CDFA #17.261). To register, contact Berenise Reyes-Albino at 617-287-4314 (voice), 617.287.4350 (TTY) or <berenise.albino@umb.edu>.
- September 29 **Cary Griffin, Senior Partner of Griffin-Hammis Associates, will be available by appointment for consultation with individuals** seriously considering or currently engaged in self-employment. For more information, please contact Lara Enein-Donovan at 617/287-4319 (voice) or <lara.eneindonovan@umb.edu>. First preference will

be given to individuals affiliated with a project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy.

- October 1 **Brain Injury Awareness Walk** will begin with registration at 10 am in Jamaica Plain. Join family, friends, kids and pets to walk, stroll or roll around Jamaica Pond on the 1.5-mile of paved path and enjoy entertainment. This fundraiser is sponsored by the Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support (BABIS) group, which meets the first Saturday of every month at Spaulding Rehab Hospital. Contact Maureen Butler at 800-669-7266, x2114 or <babis1@comcast.net> for more information or to register or volunteer.
- October 4 **Derechos Básicos** (Basic Rights) is seminar given in **Spanish** that introduces parents to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). [See details under listing for Sept. 15] Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) at Kennedy Elementary School, 5 Cherry Street in Somerville, 7-9 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>. Workshop materials are also available in Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.
- October 5 **RSI Monthly Drop-in Group** - see September 7 listing for details.
- October 6 **Making Sense of the new Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage**, a forum from 12 noon – 2 pm at the Cambridge City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway. The enrollment period for this new Medicare Part D is fast approaching. What are the advantages of signing up as soon as you are eligible? How do you choose the right insurance plan for your medication needs? Do you qualify for financial assistance to help cover the cost of insurance premiums? Linda Landry of the Disability Law Center will respond to these questions from a disability perspective. Presented by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) in conjunction with the Employees' Committee on Diversity and the Department of Human Service Programs. Contact CCPD 2 weeks in advance if you need ASL interpretation or other reasonable accommodations, 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or <cthompson@cambridgema.gov>.
- October 11 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. (See Sept. 13 listing for details.)
- October 12 **Basic Rights** is a seminar that introduces parents to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). [See details under listing for Sept. 15] This seminar will be held at the Brennan Middle School, 320 Rathburn Willard Drive in Medford, 7-9 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.
- October 15 **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Massachusetts (NAMI-MA) Annual Convention** will be at the Holiday Inn in Boxboro, Massachusetts. The hotel is easily located off Exit 28 off Route 495. Nominations are being sought for several positions on the Board of Directors, particularly candidates who will contribute a consumer perspective. For more information contact the NAMI MA office at 781-938-4048 or go to <www.namimass.org>.
- October 13 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities will not have a regular meeting this month** due to the event we are sponsoring on October 6
- October 26 **Advanced Reasonable Accommodations, a seminar for housing management** professionals, service providers and tenants, 8:30 am to 1 pm at the Blake Estates, 1344 Hyde Park Ave. in Boston. This free training is presented by the Tenant Assistance Program of MassHousing. To register, contact Janeen Harris at 617-854-1069 or <jharris@masshousing.com>. For reasonable accommodations contact Carol St. Cyr no later than one week before the workshop at 617-854-1090 (voice), 617-854-1025 (TTY), 617-722-0608 (fax) or <cstcyr@masshousing.com>.
- October 26 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. (on the 3rd Wednesday this month.) at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information, to request Interpreters, or confirm date and time of meeting. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings.
- November 3 **Un IEP para mi niño** (An IEP for My Child) is a workshop presented in **Spanish** that takes parents step-by-step through the development of the Individual Education Program (IEP) for their child who receives special education services because of his/her disability. [For details and registration information, see listing under Sept. 19.] This session will be held at Kennedy Elementary School, 5 Cherry Street in Somerville, 7-9 pm the Workshop materials are also available in Spanish.

November 10 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 – 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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AccessLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
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We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm

If you would rather receive your copy of *ACCESSLetter* electronically, please provide us with your name and e-mail address. To request that your name be removed from our mailing list, contact us at 617-349-4692 Voice, 617-349-0235 TTY, 617-349-4766 Fax, or cthompson@cambridgema.gov

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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